



# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Department of Veterans' Affairs

700 Summer Street NE, Salem, OR 97301  
Phone: (503) 373-2085 | Fax: (503) 373-2362  
[www.oregon.gov/odva](http://www.oregon.gov/odva)

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To Members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly and  
The Legislative Administrator

*Via Electronic Mail Only*

RE: Report to the Legislative Assembly  
**Nursing Care Facility Needs Assessment Report for Oregon Veterans 2015-2035**

Dear Legislators:

The 2011 Legislative Assembly enacted Chapter 296, Oregon Laws 2011 (House Bill 3208), that required the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) to enter into a contract to conduct a statewide study to determine the number of skilled nursing beds needed to meet the current and future needs of veterans for skilled nursing care and to report on the study to the Legislative Assembly. The study, entitled "*Nursing Care Facility Needs Assessment Report*" is found on ODVA's website: <http://www.oregon.gov/odva/INFO/docs/Pubs/ODVA%20Final%20Report.pdf>.

The report covers the 20-year period from 2015 to 2035. House Bill 3208 required the study to determine the following:

- The number of veterans needing skilled nursing care, including veterans needing skilled nursing care because of Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia;
- Regional catchment areas for provision of services to veterans and the number of veterans within each catchment area who may need skilled nursing care; and
- The number of veterans needing skilled nursing care whose care could be provided through community care.

In addition, the report made recommendations on the overall viability and sustainability of building additional Veterans' Homes. As background, the Oregon Veterans' Home (OVH) in The Dalles opened in 1997 and has 151 licensed beds. The new Lebanon Veterans' Home opened in October 2014 and has 154 licensed beds.

### **Summary of Findings of the Study**

Veterans needing skilled nursing care. The study projects that the number of veterans needing nursing care will remain relatively constant over the next 20 years. The estimate for veterans needing care provided in skilled nursing facility settings is 1,800 and those needing care in all types of care settings is 25,500. This trend is in contrast to the general, non-veteran population, which will have a dramatic increase in elderly nursing care needs due to the projected large population increase in the older age groups. Based on projections, the need for nursing care among the (non-veteran) elderly will likely double in the next 20 years.

Catchment areas. The study identified six regional, service delivery catchments areas for veterans who may need nursing care in the next 20 years. The six catchment areas and the projected number of veterans likely requiring care in skilled nursing facilities within each catchment areas are:

1. The Dalles and surrounding area: 60 skilled care beds
2. Lebanon and surrounding area: 260 skilled care beds
3. Roseburg (included due to a statutory reference for a third home) and surrounding area: 80 skilled care beds
4. West Metro (Washington and Clackamas County): 650 skilled care beds
5. Medford (Jackson and Josephine County): 200 skilled care beds
6. Bend and surrounding area: 110 skilled care beds

Veterans whose care could be provided through community care. The study projects that of all veterans needing nursing care over the next 20 years, over 90% (approximately 23,000 veterans) could potentially receive this care in home and community based care settings, rather than in skilled nursing facilities. The study noted that “Oregon has a utilization rate of nursing facilities 40% less than the national average,” but that it mimics the nation-wide market trends for shorter and shorter nursing stays. The most notable difference between Oregon and other states is the “emphasis the state places on home and community based services.”

#### **Summary of the Recommendations on the Viability and Siting of a Third Veterans Home Contained in the Study**

The “*Nursing Care Facility Needs Assessment Report*” contained the following four recommendations on the viability of a third ODVA Veterans’ Home:

1. If a third Veterans’ Home is built in Oregon, careful consideration should be given to siting the home in Roseburg. Based on the veterans’ populations, workforce capacity and other services available to veterans, Roseburg may not be the best location. Based on the estimated number of veterans needing care within a 50-mile catchment area, Jackson County (Medford) appears to present a more viable option.
2. Occupancy at The Dalles Veterans’ Home in the two to three years after the opening of the Lebanon Veterans’ Home will be an important indicator of the overall financial viability of future homes. A second review of both The Dalles Home and the Lebanon Home should be conducted prior to beginning construction on a third home.
3. ODVA should continue to monitor the population-level health of veterans in Oregon through public health survey data available from the Oregon Health Authority, such as the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.
4. ODVA and the Oregon Department of Human Services should continue to work together to share resource and information about the needs of aging veterans. Current efforts to identify and track Oregon veterans and share information should aid increased utilization of United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) benefits.

Sincerely,



Cameron Smith, Director